

Montgomery County Animal Services and Adoption Center
(MCASAC)

Standards of Care

Revised December 2016

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	3
HISTORY AND ABOUT US	3
MISSION AND VISION	4
ORGANIZATIONAL COMPONENTS	4
STANDARDS OF CARE	7
I. ANIMAL HOUSING	7
II. CAGE INFORMATION	9
III. SANITATION	9
IV. INTAKE PROCEDURES	12
V. ANIMAL HANDLING	13
VI. VETERINARY CARE	14
VII. SURGERY	15
VIII. EUTHANASIA	16
IX. ADOPTIONS	17
X. VISITORS	188
XII. ANIMAL HOLDS	18
XIII. PERSONAL HEALTH	20
XIV. EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS	21

Introduction

Montgomery County Animal Services and Adoption Center (MCASAC) is a division of the Montgomery County Department of Police that serves the animals and citizens of Montgomery County. As such, MCASAC is committed to providing all animals at its shelter with the best care and welfare possible given available resources. This *Standards of Care Document* provides both current practices as well as future goals and is intended to be read in its entirety so that information is not taken out of context and misunderstood.

This document will be reviewed and updated periodically by MCASAC management and staff. MCASAC staff and volunteers are expected to review the Standards of Care each time it is revised or updated.

The Standards of Care establishes only standards and does not provide details on how MCASAC operates on a daily basis. MCASAC strives to meet or exceed the standards outlined in this document whenever possible. Appendix A includes goals for future improvements.

HISTORY

In March of 2014, the Department of Police, Animal Services Division successfully opened the brand-new Montgomery County Animal Services and Adoption Center at 7315 Muncaster Mill Road, Derwood Maryland. The 49,000 square foot facility was designed to replicate some of the most modern, innovative facilities in the nation to include a functionally equipped veterinary office and surgical suite; separate admissions and return area; a dynamic, customer friendly front lobby; state-of-the art animal housing areas; and dynamic operational support areas. In 2013, the department went through the process of creating and hiring positions necessary to operate the largest open-admission shelter in the region.

The new facility is also home to the field services operation that provides enforcement of state and local animal laws and is available 24-hours-a day, 7 days-a-week in service to both the public and animals in Montgomery County.

ABOUT US

The Montgomery County Animal Services and Adoption Center (MCASAC) provides high-standard sheltering and care to the homeless, abused, and neglected animals in Montgomery County and ensures the safety and welfare of the county's citizens.

The Center's doors are open to all animals in need to include: dogs and cats, farm animals, wildlife, and exotics. Trained staff provide animals with daily care, mental and physical enrichment, health and wellness checks, and more. Through adoptions, spay and neuter assistance, rabies vaccination clinics, education and outreach, the Center serves as a critical community resource to promote and advocate for responsible pet care. With community support and partnerships with other animal-welfare groups, our Foster, Rescue and Volunteer programs enhance and save the lives of even more homeless animals.

Animal Services Officers are on-call seven days a week to investigate citizen complaints and respond to animal emergencies 24 hours-a-day. These calls include animal-related matters such as: animal abuse and neglect; law enforcement; calls regarding stray, rabid, or aggressive animals; and sick or injured wildlife.

The Montgomery County Animal Services and Adoption Center is proud to serve as the region's largest eco-friendly animal sheltering agency.

MISSION AND VISION

We serve and protect all animals and citizens in our community with dedication and compassion. We strengthen the human-animal bond through education, humane law enforcement, and by promoting responsible guardianship.

MCASAC's vision is to become a model open-admission animal shelter and a valued resource for the people and animals of Montgomery County. MCASAC envisions a shelter where all healthy and treatable animals find new homes, where they are housed in a low-stress, comfortable environment, where residents can turn in times of personal crisis for help with their pets, where citizens are educated on the proper care of animals, and where abused and neglected animals can receive the love and care they need to recover.

Working in close partnership with the County, other rescue organizations and shelters, local veterinarians, and the citizens of Montgomery County and beyond, MCASAC is confident that it can and will achieve its goals.

MCASAC is also committed to providing the best welfare to animals possible and is also committed to the Five Freedoms:

1. Freedom from Hunger and Thirst by constant access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and vigor.
2. Freedom from Discomfort by providing an appropriate environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area.
3. Freedom from Pain, Injury or Disease by prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment.
4. Freedom to Express Normal Behavior by providing sufficient space, proper facilities and companionship.
5. Freedom from Fear and Distress by ensuring conditions and treatment that avoid mental suffering.

ORGANIZATIONAL COMPONENTS

Customer Service: Customer Service staff are committed to serving the public making the MCASAC a positive, friendly experience providing customers the information they need to include services ranging from the adoption process to pet licensing to community resources. Customer Service staff direct visitors to the various animal housing areas and help potential adopters begin the adoption process. Customer service also answers phone calls about lost and found pets, gives information about available animals, and answers questions about volunteering and community events.

Shelter Care: MCASAC maintains and operates the only open-admission animal shelter in Montgomery County, and provides a high standard of care for lost, abandoned, abused, and unwanted animals. Dogs and cats make up the largest populations at the shelter, but many other companion animals also come through the shelter doors. Rabbits, guinea pigs, and mice are the most common, though it is not unusual to find turtles, lizards, and birds. The shelter has also seen its fair share of exotic animals to include pot-bellied pigs, horses, peacock, an iguana, and a talking cockatoo – who only spoke Russian!

Dedicated Animal Care Attendants provide daily care and support for the animals housed at the shelter ensuring each animal receives exceptional care.

Medical Care:

All of MCASAC's animals are vaccinated, provided with flea treatment and de-wormer and are tested for various diseases, as needed, upon arrival. MCASAC also performs spay/neuter surgeries on intact animals in the shelter's surgical suite prior to adoption. MCASAC works closely with other veterinary clinics and hospitals in the County who assist with specialized treatments and surgeries beyond the scope of services provided by the shelter's highly professional veterinary staff. Veterinary staff also assist on animal services cases involving inadequate care, abuse or cruelty, and neglect performing medicals exams, treatment, necropsies, and testimony, as needed.

Adoptions Program: MCASAC is committed to offering a streamlined, simple process to allow potential adopters to adopt a new pet with ease. Frequent adoption promotions are used help visitors notice typically overlooked animals for adoption.

Volunteer Program: The volunteer program at MCASAC began taking new volunteers in April, 2014 and has grown tremendously since then. The volunteer program provides a variety of opportunities including, but not limited to, **Dog Handler, Cat Handler, Small Animal Helper, Customer Service Greeter, Behavior Assistant, Animal Transporter, Tour Guide, Enrichment Assistant, Kennel Helper and "Lucky Break" Supporter.** Volunteers regularly assist staff with many of the animals in the building, plus help with administrative tasks, facilitating adoptions, and with various other day-to-day operational functions. They regularly attend events on behalf of MCASAC and help promote adoptable animals through social media and photography. Volunteers have taken on many roles and are an essential part of shelter operations.

Foster and Rescue Programs: Thriving Foster and Rescue programs are vital to a high population shelter environment like MCASAC and a dedicated Foster/Rescue Coordinator has made tremendous strides in creating these networks in a relatively short period of time. MCASAC is an active regional partner with animal shelters throughout Maryland, Washington D.C., and Virginia.

Rescue organizations allow MCASAC to manage populations and help overlooked animals find new homes. Rescue groups often take particular breeds or types of animals, and seek out adopters through different channels and active marketing. Many animals that would otherwise be overlooked in MCASAC due to behavior issues, breed, or just the sheer number of choices, often find homes quickly once they move to a rescue organization.

Foster homes can be utilized for animals with behavior issues, or those who become overly stressed in a kennel environment. It is helpful for animals with injuries or medical issues, such as the puppy who was hit by a car and needed to heal after having surgery on her broken hip. The majority of fosters, however, help care for the kittens who arrive at the shelter in vast numbers each year, and need special care until they are old enough to be spayed/neutered and be adopted.

Outreach and Education Programs: Part of MCASAC's role in the community is to provide education and outreach to citizens about animal welfare, compassion for animals, and proper care. As the outreach component of MCASAC continues to grow, great strides have been made already. MCASAC regularly gives tours, led by staff and volunteers, for a variety of community groups. Many of these are youth groups come from schools or

Scout Troops. Tour participants are given a chance to learn about the shelter and animal care in general. MCASAC also hosts and attends events in the area that help to increase awareness of the shelter's location, as well as providing information about relevant initiatives such as spay/neuter campaigns and free rabies clinics. MCASAC Officers visit local schools to talk to students about responsible pet ownership, animal welfare topics, and the roles and responsibilities of an officer. As part of a larger outreach initiative to help reach out to the Spanish-speaking population in Montgomery County, MCASAC is working to translate key materials (from licensing to adoption paperwork) into Spanish.

Pet Licensing and Rabies Clinics: MCASAC is responsible for administering the County's Pet Licensing Program ensuring that dogs and cats in Montgomery County are properly licensed and vaccinated for rabies. Licenses may be purchased at MCASAC in person, by mail or on-line through the division's website. MCASAC also hosts monthly vaccination clinics from April to September each year. Free rabies vaccinations are offered with the purchase of a pet license for cats, dogs, and ferrets. Microchip services are also provided, for an additional fee. The City of Rockville and City of Gaithersburg Animal Services also join the clinics and provide the same service for residents of their municipalities.

Field Services: The Field Services Officers are on duty seven days-a-week to investigate citizen complaints, enforce state and county animal laws, and respond to animal emergencies 24 hours-a-day, 7-days-a-week. In addition to enforcement efforts, Field Services Officers utilize humane education information on a variety of topics to include animal ownership requirements under both state and local laws, reporting suspected violations, pet licensing and rabies vaccinations, wildlife mitigation, appropriate housing and restraint techniques, and livestock and poultry care standards.

Standards of Care

I. ANIMAL HOUSING

A. DOGS AND CATS

1. Cage Size, Design and Materials

Cage Size – Primary enclosures must provide sufficient space to allow each animal, regardless of size, to make normal postural adjustments (e.g., turn freely and easily stand, sit, stretch, move their head, without touching the top of the enclosure; lie in a resting position with limbs extended; be able to get away from defecation, and move about and assume a comfortable posture for feeding, drinking, urinating and defecating). Food, water bowls and litter boxes (for cats) should not impede the animal's ability to stretch out. Dogs should be able to hold their tails erect when in a normal standing position.

Design – The primary enclosures must be structurally sound and maintained in safe working condition to properly confine animals, prevent injury, keep other animals out, and enable the animals to remain dry and clean. There must not be any sharp edges, gaps, or other defects that could cause injury or trap a limb or other body part. Secure latches or other closing devices must be present. For cats, vertical as well as horizontal dimensions are important, as cats show a preference for spending time on raised surfaces and high structures rather than on the floor. Therefore, perches, dens, or a shelf are available in all cat cages.

Materials – Only non-porous surfaces that can be easily disinfected and that are durable enough to withstand repeated cleaning are used in all animal areas.

In certain situations, the above requirements are not practical or appropriate. These situations include:

- transport;
- decreased space required for medical reasons as determined by a MCASAC veterinarian;
- temporary pre/post-surgical confinement (24-48 hours total);
- intake processing; and
- large intake of animals at one time due to impoundment from Animal Control, public emergency/disaster, etc.

2. Ventilation and Air Quality

The standard acceptable level of 10-20 room air exchanges per hour with fresh air. To ensure proper function, air handler maintenance is performed in the spring and fall of each year and air filters are changed in accordance with established maintenance schedules.

3. Temperature and Humidity

Temperatures are maintained between 60 and 80 degrees Fahrenheit. Relative humidity ranges from 30% to 70%.

Adjustments in temperature and humidity due to individual breed, hair coat, medical condition, and age are made as needed. This is typically accomplished by relocating the animal, adjusting the thermostat, and providing fans or warmer bedding materials.

4. Drainage

Drains function properly to readily remove waste and water from dog kennels and from all other rooms of the shelter.

5. Lighting

Facilities should be designed to offer as much natural light as possible, but when artificial light is the only source it should approximate natural light in composition, duration, and intensity. Periods of darkness are equally important and should mimic as closely as possible the natural pattern of sleep. Lighting is provided in each animal room during the day and turned off at the end of the day to mimic natural light cycles.

6. Noise Control

Loud and sudden noises can cause stress to shelter animals and staff. The following steps to help reduce noise and are taken wherever possible:

- Housing dogs and cats in separate areas, ideally with no ability for either species to hear one another.
- Adjusting the public address system in each animal room to the lowest decibel level practical.
- Educating the staff and public about the need to speak softly around the animals.
- Reducing dog barking and anxiety by providing enrichment for the dogs including music and other sounds that are proven to be soothing or calming for them.
- Maintaining all mechanical equipment in good working order to reduce noise and vibration.

7. Standard Enclosure Items

The following standard enclosure items are in every cage unless specified otherwise by a staff veterinarian:

- Appropriately sized clean water and food bowls;
- Clean bedding;
- Elevated resting place;
- Assigned carriers for cats (stored in, above or near each cage); and
- Appropriately sized and clean litter boxes for cats.
- Enrichment items

8. Feeding and Watering

Cats are given dry food in the am, with the amount correlated to their weight. Extra dry or canned food is provided to animals with special feeding requirements. Kittens under 12 weeks of age are given constant access to dry food and are provided with canned food 2-3 times daily depending on age.

Adult dogs are fed dry food once daily. Extra dry or canned food is provided to animals with special feeding requirements, including puppies (10 weeks and younger), nursing mothers, and other dogs as directed by a staff veterinarian. Feeding schedules and special diets are prescribed by the staff veterinarian as needed. Clean water is available at all times unless directed otherwise by a staff veterinarian.

9. Enrichment

Enrichment items are defined as items or actions that stimulate normal behavior and reduce stress and boredom.

Enrichment items are provided to all animals unless otherwise prescribed by a staff veterinarian. All new enrichment items must be approved by the Shelter Manager or Veterinarian. Once approved, the item can be used, as needed, by Animal Care staff. New enrichment items should be provided on a daily basis.

One-on-one time spent with staff or volunteers is the primary form of enrichment and training for shelter animals. Consistent and predictable interactions with people will help prepare the animal for meeting adopters as well as long term success in the home. Animal enrichment can include things such as exercise, outdoor play time, various forms of human interaction, grooming, and even the type of bedding provided.

Conspecific interactions in the shelter are used as part of a comprehensive enrichment program to provide an outlet for energy and promote positive social interactions. The purpose of this program is to allow animals to express normal social behavior and for staff to observe the animals' interactions. Information gathered from these social experiences will be used to guide and promote foster, rescue, or adoption placement.

Animals selected to be housed or otherwise interact with members of the same species must be screened for health or behavior issues prior to selection.

B. EXOTICS

Animals brought to MCASAC that are not dogs or cats are hereafter referred to as exotics. This category includes, but is not limited to, birds, gerbils, hamsters, ferrets, rabbits, lizards, snakes, opossums, turtles, raccoons, squirrels, and fish.

A staff veterinarian or the Shelter Manager will determine all aspects of care for exotics, including cage size, temperature, humidity, feeding, and other care decisions. The Foster and Rescue Coordinator maintains a contact list of experts for exotics.

II. CAGE INFORMATION

Every cage contains a cage card detailing basic information about each animal occupying the cage, including name, identification number, breed, age and gender.

Additional cage signs may be used to provide essential information regarding medical condition, behavioral concerns, handling notifications, or the animal's status, including availability for adoption, pending investigations, and any quarantine information. The information on these signs supersedes any other cage cards.

III. SANITATION

This document uses the word "sanitation" to mean a combination of cleaning and disinfection. MCASAC maintains sanitary conditions to prevent the transfer of disease, which could result in an outbreak that could potentially lead to the closure of a portion or all of the facility. Proper sanitation is the foundation of every preventative medicine program.

A. DEFINITIONS

1. **Cleaning** - The act of physically removing organic matter (feces, urine, food particles, etc.). An area that has been cleaned should look physically and visibly free from debris. However, harmful pathogens may still be present after cleaning.
2. **Disinfection** - The process of killing pathogens in a given area.
3. **Sterilization** - The killing of all microbes; this is what is done for surgical instruments.

B. PROCEDURES

1. Shelter in General

All common area floors are swept and disinfected every morning and throughout the day as needed, using disinfectants approved by the Shelter Manager or as prescribed by the staff veterinarian. Urination or defecation “accidents” on common area floors are cleaned up and disinfected immediately. Garbage, trash, and recycling are placed in appropriate bins and removed at the end of each day and throughout the day as needed.

2. Dog Cages

Dog cages are spot cleaned daily and deep cleaned and disinfected weekly, with the animal removed from the cage. All enclosure items, with the exception of Kuranda beds, and clean bedding are replaced daily. Kuranda beds are cleaned with the cage. After the initial cleaning, dog cages are spot cleaned throughout the day as needed. All cages and cage items are deep cleaned and disinfected between animals. Floors in dog areas are mopped and disinfected each day.

The cages of healthy puppies are cleaned first, followed by healthy dogs, sick puppies, and sick dogs. Dog cages that house a seriously ill animal with an infectious disease are cleaned per specific guidelines set by the staff veterinarian; this often includes multiple disinfections.

3. Cat Cages

Cat cages are spot-cleaned daily and deep cleaned and disinfected weekly. Cat showcases are spot cleaned daily and deep cleaned monthly and between new animal populations. Cats are left in cages and showcases during cleaning when possible. New litter is provided and food and water bowls are cleaned and refilled. If the bedding is not soiled or wet, it is shaken out and reused. In some cases, additional cleaning of the cage may be required and the cat may be removed. After the initial cleaning, litter boxes and/or cages are spot-cleaned as necessary throughout the day. All cat cages are fully cleaned and disinfected prior to placement of a new cat. Floors in cat areas are swept and disinfected each day and throughout the day as needed.

The cages of healthy kittens are cleaned first, followed by healthy cats, sick kittens, and sick cats. Cat cages that house animals with a known infectious disease are cleaned as prescribed by the Chief Veterinarian. This may require multiple disinfections and the assistance of the dog staff to minimize the possibility of disease transfer to other cats in the facility.

4. Surgical Areas

All surgical areas, including the prep area, surgical tables, and the recovery area are fully cleaned and disinfected daily. Floors are swept and disinfected each morning before starting surgery, and throughout the day as needed. Surgical instruments are cleaned and then sterilized after each usage.

5. Intake Rooms

Intake rooms are cleared of any used carriers, boxes, and crates each evening. All counters and cat cages are fully cleaned and disinfected daily. The intake area for dogs is cleaned and disinfected between each dog. Floors are swept and disinfected each morning and throughout the day as needed. Intake equipment, including cages, are cleaned and disinfected after each usage.

6. Admissions and Adoptions Lobbies

The receiving area is cleared of any donations, used carriers, boxes, and crates each evening. All counters and are fully cleaned and disinfected daily. Floors are swept and disinfected throughout the day as needed and at the end of each day. Any urine or feces on floors or counters is cleaned up and disinfected immediately.

7. Laundry Room

Laundry is washed and dried, folded, and stored throughout the day.

8. Crates and Carriers

All carriers and feral boxes used for transporting animals to the shelter or moving them within the shelter are cleaned and disinfected between each animal, with the possible exception of newly arrived animals from the same litter or household.

9. Outdoor Areas

Feces is picked up immediately and placed in outside, lined trash cans. These cans are bagged daily and taken to the dumpster.

10. Personal Hygiene

Hand washing is the most effective method of preventing the transfer of germs that can cause illness in both people and animals. While hand disinfectants are useful, thoroughly washing hands with soap and water is the most effective means of preventing the transfer of germs to other people and to animals.

Staff arrives at work in clean clothes and has a change of clothing available as necessary. Protective gear such as disposable gloves, masks, shoe covers, gowns, and eyewear are available for use as needed or as directed by the staff veterinarian.

C. PEST AND RODENT CONTROL

1. Exterminators

Regular extermination services are performed as needed.

2. Animal Food

Dog food in cages is picked up before the shelter closes each night, with the exception of food for puppies, kittens, nursing mothers and animals with special needs or requirements. Dishes and enrichment items brought to the Food Prep Room for washing are emptied of all food and organic matter before being placed on counters. All food is stored in sealed containers, including dog and cat treats.

3. Garbage and Trash

All non-recyclable refuse is collected and put in trash bags each evening. All garbage and trash bags are removed from the building prior to closing.

IV. INTAKE PROCEDURES

Upon arrival, dogs are placed in kennel runs and cats are placed in cages until the intake process is completed. All animals are provided water immediately upon arrival. Animals less than four months of age are provided food immediately upon arrival. The intake process is completed within 24 hours and the animal is moved from holding to kennel runs and cat suites, as appropriate.

Donations brought in by the general public should be checked and properly stored until such time it can be relocated in the shelter. Donations not acceptable for use in the shelter housing areas will be returned to the donor or disposed of accordingly. Accepted donations for specific animals should be marked and stored in or near the housing area where the animal is being kept.

A. DOGS AND CATS

An animal's general physical condition is evaluated upon arrival and any emergency medical issues are addressed immediately. The animal is weighed, the age is estimated, and its nutritional needs are determined. Each animal is checked for identification, i.e., microchip, tattoo, tags, and etc., and, if needed, is vaccinated, microchipped (if not already done) and parasite controls are administered. The general behavior of the animal is also assessed. A record is established in the MCASAC database for the animal and all information is entered immediately. Housing is assigned and entered into the MCASAC database and a kennel card specifically identifying that animal is posted on the cage.

B. EXOTICS

An animal's general physical condition is first evaluated and emergency medical issues are addressed immediately upon arrival. The physical and nutritional needs are assessed, and the animal is assigned appropriate housing.

C. FERAL AND COMMUNITY CATS

In the event that a cat with an ear tip is impounded at MCASAC, the cat is immediately checked for a microchip. In the event that a microchip is located, attempts are made to promptly contact the owner, rescue or community cat group to which the microchip is registered. In the event that a microchip cannot be located, an email is generated to local community cat advocate groups within 48 hours so that they may make plans to claim and return the cat. All ear tipped cats are microchipped, if not already done, and vaccinated for rabies before release.

If the cat is not ear tipped, the cat is altered, vaccinated, dewormed, and ear tipped within 7 days of intake, held for recovery and then transferred to a community cat advocate for release back to the area. When returning cats to the field, the involved community cat advocate will be given an exact address.

When surrendering an ear tipped cat or one believed to have come from a feral or community cat colony, finders will be asked questions about the number of cats in the area and if a caregiver has been identified. The finder will be educated about TNR and solutions to reducing trespassing and other nuisance behaviors from cats. Information gathered, including finders contact information, may be provided to a community cat group for further assistance and advice regarding community cat colonies.

V. ANIMAL HANDLING

A. PROPER RESTRAINT

Proper handling protects animals and people from injury and minimizes stress for all. Handling an animal is carried out as humanely as possible by trained staff. The type and amount of restraint used must be appropriate for the individual animal and the specific situation. In all cases, the minimal amount of physical restraint needed to accomplish the task without injury to people or animals is used. Thus, all animal handlers are trained in proper restraint with emphasis on how to use the minimum amount of restraint required.

B. EQUIPMENT

Examples of equipment used for animal restraint are as follows: leashes, collars, muzzles, catch poles (used for dogs only), towels, squeeze cages, traps, cat nets, pole syringes, snappy snares, and cat gloves.

C. EVENTS

Animal handlers at events are required to complete the appropriate animal training, i.e., dog handling, cat handling and/or small animal and exotics handling, as well as reading and signing the events training materials. Event organizers are made aware that MCASAC do not participate at the expense of an animal's welfare, and that participation of MCASAC animals is dependent upon availability of animals that are suitable for the event.

D. DOG HANDLERS

Dog handlers are required to complete all associated training and be approved for independent dog walking and socialization.

E. CAT HANDLERS

Cat handlers are required to complete cat socialization training and be approved for independent cat handling and socialization.

F. PUBLIC INTERACTION

Persons handling animals and interacting with the public at the shelter are required to complete the appropriate animal training, i.e., dog walking or cat socialization training, as well as matchmaking training, and be approved for independent matchmaker. All public interaction is done in a safe and humane manner and in a way that does not cause stress or harm to the animal or the public.

G. FERAL CATS

Special consideration is given to the housing and handling of feral cats. Appropriate use of cage covers, feral boxes, traps, squeeze cages, and sedatives can minimize stress and greatly reduce risk of injury to the animal or handler. Feral cats may be housed for stray hold while being prepared for TNR or placement in a barn home. Feral cats who cannot be released due to health, staff safety, or constraints on space, may be euthanized.

H. BEHAVIOR

The assessment of each animal's behavior begins at the time of intake and continues until the final disposition. An animal's behavior will vary based on its prior experiences, the situation it was recently

removed from, the adjustment period in a new environment, etc. MCASAC staff and volunteers monitor each animal's behavior daily through all types of interactions.

I. DANGEROUS ANIMALS

MCASAC goes to great lengths to ensure that the environment is safe for both humans and animals. Some animals present a higher risk of injury to people and other animals, including venomous snakes, reptiles, various types of wildlife or exotic animals, and animals that are anticipated to be aggressive. Special housing considerations are given to these animals and only trained staff members are allowed to handle them.

Every effort is made to transfer prohibited/restricted exotics and wildlife to facilities with appropriate permits/licensing and expertise in their handling and care, as quickly as possible.

Animals displaying threatening or dangerous behaviors on intake may be placed in special housing, or, at times, in the general population with special precautions and appropriate signage in order to give them time to settle in.

Dogs known to be highly aggressive are housed in such a way that they can be shifted from one cage to another using a shift door, thus preventing the possibility of the dog getting loose and minimizing danger to staff handling these animals. Only qualified staff handles these animals.

VI. VETERINARY CARE

A. PREVENTATIVE MEDICINE

The Medical Staff focuses on the prevention of disease as well as rapid diagnosis and treatment of ill and potentially contagious animals. Preventative measures are accomplished through the use of appropriate vaccination protocols, internal and external parasite control, and nutritional support (proper nutrition for stage and state of the animal). All medical protocols are carried out by Veterinary Technicians under the direction of the Chief or Staff Veterinarian. Licensed veterinarians perform complete physical examinations and surgeries, as well as prescribe medications and nutritional changes to diet. The Veterinary Technicians are trained and able to make initial assessments of animal conditions, convey this information to a veterinarian, and administer care as prescribed by that veterinarian.

Individual animals are assessed for their state of health and nutritional status, as well as the population as a whole. Individual animals, groups of animals, and whole rooms may be placed under quarantine. The decision to quarantine a room and the length of quarantine are made under the direct supervision of a staff veterinarian and overseen by the Chief Veterinarian. The population is evaluated daily for contagious and infectious diseases and the decisions made are based on individual as well as population needs.

Emergencies are evaluated as quickly as possible. Animals may be treated at the shelter, humanely euthanized, or sent to a local animal hospital.

Precautions taken to control the spread of disease include:

- Disposable gloves are worn when touching animals and/or hands are washed after touching an animal and before touching another animal. This decreases the risk of disease transmission from fomites, which are objects that are able to transmit infectious organisms, i.e., parasites, bacteria, viruses, or

fungi from one animal to another; they may include toys, food and water bowls, hair, and clothing, to name a few.

- Disposable protective gear such as gowns are worn and changed between handling each ill animal. Lint rollers are used on all clothing that may make contact or exposed to the fur of an animal before touching another animal.
- Any Animal with a confirmed or suspected contagious disease is isolated from the general population to minimize exposure whenever possible
- Dogs on medication for infectious illness, such as kennel cough, are walked last and only in a designated area.
- When socializing cats with infectious disease (such as upper respiratory tract infection), the encounter takes place in the cat's cage instead of the socializing room.
- All articles in cages that are not disposable are disinfected as well as washed before being placed in another cage.
- Bins used in rooms such as garbage cans and litter cans are disinfected regularly.
- Only disposable litter boxes are used. They are disposed of in sealed garbage bag (unless otherwise directed by a staff veterinarian).
- Food and water bowls and enrichment items are washed and disinfected as soon as they enter the kitchen area.

B. DISEASE OUTBREAKS

When a disease outbreak occurs in the shelter, the Chief Veterinarian may decide to quarantine a room. If the outbreak cannot be contained to one or two rooms, the Chief Veterinarian, in consultation with the Shelter Manager and the Director, decides whether to close the shelter, at least for that species. Closing the shelter to a certain species means that Animal Control cannot bring any animal of that species to MCASAC, except for the purpose of euthanasia, and that MCASAC will not accept any surrenders or strays of that species. In such situations, MCASAC attempts to work with other area shelters and rescues to enlist their help so owners that must surrender animals during this time period are able to do so. When a room is closed for quarantine, no one except medical and designated cleaning staff will be allowed in that room. Protective outerwear is worn in these rooms. All items removed from a quarantined room, such as waste materials, are placed into a garbage bag which is sealed and immediately brought to the dumpster outside of the shelter. When available, Quarantine rooms use only disposable materials (bowls, towels, etc.).

VII. SURGERY

In most cases, dogs and cats having surgery at MCASAC are fasted overnight prior to surgery. Exceptions include emergency surgery, surgery performed on puppies and kittens, and other situations deemed appropriate by the Staff Veterinarian. In preparation for surgery, the animals are moved to enclosures reserved for surgical patients, and are scanned again for a microchip. The animals are given premedication which includes analgesia and sedation; the actual drugs vary according to species and the individual animal. An induction agent is given to dogs that are then intubated and placed on gas anesthesia. Cats are generally given gas anesthesia by mask or injectable anesthetics. The animal is then prepared for surgery. Additional pain medication may be given as prescribed by the veterinarian. The weight of the animal, any findings during the physical exam, doses of medications and the surgical procedure performed are recorded for each animal and entered into the MCASAC database. All controlled substances and the amount used are recorded in the controlled substance log book. Animals wake up in the surgical room and are offered a small amount of food when surgical staff deems appropriate. Post-operative care instructions, along with any medications prescribed, are sent home with adopted animals. Animals staying at MCASAC receive a daily post-operative

check for one week. Dogs and cats are spayed or neutered when they weigh two pounds or more. Animals that are pregnant, are in heat, have a pyometra, or have a mild upper respiratory infection may still undergo anesthesia and surgery at the discretion of the surgeon.

VIII. EUTHANASIA

A. POLICY

Euthanasia is performed at MCASAC as a last resort and in a humane manner as needed to maintain a manageable population of healthy, treatable, and adoptable animals.

No more than three medical and animal care staff members that are certified, or trained, in euthanasia to assist are allowed to be present during the euthanasia process. This is to ensure a smooth and stress-free environment for the animal as well as the person(s) performing euthanasia.

The Shelter Manager or Executive Director may make special exceptions to this policy at his or her discretion.

B. SELECTION

Each animal is evaluated on an individual basis for its potential to be reunited with its owner or participation in MCASAC's adoption, foster, rescue programs, community cat program, barn program, or other live release options. Those animals unable to participate in any of these programs or that cannot be reunited with their owners are considered for euthanasia.

Lastly, holding or stray wait periods, as required by law, are considered:

- All dogs and cats without a known owner are held for 120 hours before a disposition is decided (days that the shelter is closed to the public are not counted), exceptions apply to the following:
 - Animals under 12 weeks of age may be placed into foster homes immediately
 - Animals experiencing pain and suffering which cannot be managed, may be humanely euthanized
 - Ear tipped cats or cats that are micro-chipped back to a community caretaker may be returned to their community immediately
- Bite quarantine animals are held for a minimum of 10 days or until Code Enforcement authorizes the release of the animal(s).
- Animal Control Officers may place an animal under a hold period for situations requiring investigation or enforcement follow-up.

C. PROCEDURES

1. Training/Certification

Employees performing euthanasia are trained and certified through an approved organization. Once this training is completed, the employee is then supervised in his or her ability to humanely perform the euthanasia. The employee then undergoes a final evaluation before receiving approval and certification by the Animal Care Attendant Supervisor and a staff veterinarian.

2. Environment

The room in which euthanasia takes place is clean and private and maintained as a low-stress environment.

Only one euthanasia is performed at a time. Only one animal is in the euthanasia room at a time so that euthanasia is performed in a quiet, calm environment.

3. Microchip Scan

All animals are scanned upon entry to the shelter for microchips in an effort to identify them. Because these technologies are imperfect, scans are also performed during the medical intake process, prior to spay/neuter surgery and prior to any disposition including adoption, return to owner, and transfers to rescues. If euthanasia is elected, the previously unidentified animals are rescanned before being euthanized for the presence of a microchip.

4. Drugs

Only drugs and methods approved by the Chief Veterinarian or Shelter Manager are used for euthanasia. An animal may be sedated before injecting the euthanasia solution in order to provide sedation, analgesia, and anesthesia. Euthanasia solution, which is a barbiturate, is given in a vein or the peritoneum once the animal is calm or sedated. If the intracardiac route is chosen, euthanasia does not take place until the animal is chemically sedated enough to reach a comatose state.

5. Record Keeping

A record of drugs received and used for euthanasia by MCASAC is kept in a manner consistent with the requirements of the United States Drug Enforcement Administration and the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. Euthanasia records and logs are kept filed for a minimum of two years.

IX. ADOPTIONS

All cats and dogs adopted from MCASAC are eight weeks of age or older, current on vaccinations, parasite control, microchipped and altered, except in very rare cases where medical exceptions may be necessary. All cats are tested for feline immunodeficiency virus (FIV) and feline leukemia virus (FeLV) and dogs over 6 months of age are tested for heartworm disease. The goal of the MCASAC adoption program is to place as many animals as possible into suitable homes and prepare adopters for the responsibilities of pet ownership.

This is accomplished by screening all potential adopters for past Code Enforcement violations, reviewing adopters' histories in the MCASAC database, requiring identification and proof of address, and requiring adopters to be at least 18 years of age. Potential adopters complete an application which is used to determine eligibility for adoption and to provide information to help identify and select appropriate animals. Every potential adopter meets with an adoption counselor to discuss any known behavior and medical knowledge of the animal(s) they are interested in adopting, care of their new pet(s), acclimation into the new home, and to answer any questions prior to finalizing the adoption. The adoption counselor also goes over all medical history for the pet including vaccinations, medications, and follow-up care.

Animals are surgically altered prior to leaving the shelter unless determined unfit for surgery by a veterinarian. Educational handouts, medical history, and an adoption agreement are provided to the adopter. All adopters are provided with a certificate entitling them to a free initial exam at a participating veterinarian as well as support for behavior and training through a monthly Adopter Workshop and post-adoption counseling by behavior staff when necessary.

MCASAC utilizes adoption promotions throughout the year to increase public awareness and encourage responsible people to adopt. The adoption program is evaluated on a periodic basis to ensure the needs of the animals and the adopting community is met.

X. VISITORS

All visitors to MCASAC are directed and/or supervised through the building by a staff member or trained volunteer to maximize safety of both people and animals. Visitors may be here for a variety of reasons, including facility repairs or contract work, group tours, adoptions, rescues, and redemptions. Staff and volunteers use this time with visitors as an educational opportunity, to convey information about MCASAC and the adoption or redemption process, and to answer any questions visitors may have.

XI. FOSTER CARE

MCASAC manages a foster care program in which certain animals are taken into homes temporarily rather than remaining in the shelter. In addition to saving the lives of animals, this program was designed to achieve the following goals:

1. Raise underage kittens and puppies to an age where they may become available adoption, providing bottle feeding if necessary, socialization, and special attention.
2. Provide special care to injured and/or sick animals.
3. Provide additional training, behavior modification and/or observation of animals who are not thriving in the shelter environment and need additional behavioral resources.

Animals available for fostering are identified by the Foster Coordinator or managerial staff. All foster parents are pre-screened and sign contracts with MCASAC prior to housing any animals. Throughout the foster period, the foster parent must maintain contact with the shelter, bring the animal(s) in for all scheduled vaccines and medical treatments, and communicate with shelter staff about any relevant information regarding the animal(s) in their care. Upon request by MCASAC, foster parents must return foster animals to the shelter in a timely and reasonable fashion.

Animals placed in foster care are provided the same medical care as those housed at the shelter. MCASAC is responsible for providing support to the foster parents, including training if requested, regularly scheduled medical appointments, medicines as needed, emergency medical services as available, and ongoing help with questions and issues that arise. MCASAC is responsible for following up on all foster placements and maintaining the follow-up information in the MCASAC database. A foster placement may be terminated at any time by MCASAC, and foster animals that have been returned to the shelter are subject to the same euthanasia criteria as all other shelter animals.

XII. ANIMAL HOLDS

Animals arriving at the shelter are subject to various state requirements as to the length of time they must be held prior to being made available for adoption.

1. STRAY ANIMALS

Impounded stray animals are held for 120 hours. The day the animal arrives at the shelter, unless its prior to operating, and days the shelter is closed to the public do not count for purposes of the holding period. After 120 hours, the animal becomes property of the shelter and thus may be placed up for adoption, transferred to another organization, or humanely euthanized.

2. OWNER-SURRENDERED ANIMALS

Owner-surrendered animals are not subject to a required state mandated holding period. When an owner surrenders an animal, he or she immediately relinquishes all rights to the animal and the animal may be immediately placed up for adoption, transferred to another organization, or humanely euthanized. Any person wishing to surrender an animal and identifying themselves as the owner, or acting on behalf of the owner, is required to provide sufficient proof of ownership, such as a rabies certificate or other veterinary record, a current pet license, microchip information, adoption information or bill of sale as well as an official form of photo ID, such as a state-issued ID card, valid driver's license, government or military ID or valid passport. If this information cannot be provided, the shelter may choose to hold the animal for the 120-hour stray period to allow for other individuals who may come forward to make claims of ownership and show interest in redeeming the animal.

3. ANIMALS LEFT BEHIND AFTER EVICTIONS

Animals left behind when owners are evicted from their homes are considered to be abandoned. If an owner cannot be located, these animals are impounded by MCASAC and held for the 120-hour stray period. Individuals identifying themselves as the owner of an abandoned animal(s) and attempting to redeem these animals are subject to all the requirements as individuals redeeming stray dogs. Depending on the condition of the animal and the circumstances in which they were left, owners may be required to speak with a Code Enforcement Officer or to meet other requirements before the animal can be released.

4. INVESTIGATIONS

Some animals are the subject of investigations by Code Enforcement or other animal control or police agencies for various reasons (suspicions of cruelty, abuse, neglect, etc.). The amount of time an animal is held varies as investigations are conducted and completed. MCASAC cares for these animals during the investigation period, and the animals are released when they are no longer needed as evidence in a case, or as otherwise legally allowed.

5. BITE QUARANTINE AND DANGEROUS ANIMAL HEARINGS

MCASAC follows state and city regulations for animals that have bitten a person or another animal and are suspected of being a potentially dangerous animal or rabies carrier. Animals that have bitten must be quarantined for 10 days at the shelter or at the owner's home as directed by Code Enforcement. If an animal is believed to be potentially dangerous or dangerous by Code Enforcement, the animal may be held by MCASAC, at the owner's expense, until such time a hearing is held by the Animal Matters Hearing Board and a determination regarding custody is made.

Only trained and approved staff are allowed access to quarantined animals; this includes bite cases as well as animals quarantined for rabies evaluation and/or infectious disease. Limited personnel access is mandatory to safeguard others from potential injury (bite, scratch, or infectious disease) as well as to prevent the spread of infectious disease.

6. EMERGENCY HOLD

MCASAC does not offer regular boarding to the public due to space constraints at the shelter; however, during an emergency (natural disaster, fire, flooding, domestic violence situation, etc.), short-term holding in temporary cages may be provided on a case by case basis as determined by the Executive Director or his or her designee. Owners are encouraged to utilize other resources and find immediate alternatives for housing.

7. CONDITIONAL RELEASE

Animals released to an owner may have a conditional release requirement. This means the staff veterinarian may require the owner to seek some type of medical care follow-up with their regular veterinarian and provide proof of completion to MCASAC. Conditional Releases are also set by Animal Control for things like mandatory spay/neuter, housing repair, etc. If any of these requirements are not met, Animal Control will re-impound the animal.

XIII. PERSONAL HEALTH

A. STAFF VACCINATION

All staff handling animals at MCASAC must be vaccinated against rabies. It is recommended that all staff be current on tetanus and talk to their personal physicians for further recommendations on rabies vaccinations. Vaccinations may be administered by the Health Department or an individual's personal physician. To ensure that staff maintains effective protection against rabies, blood is drawn every two years after the initial vaccination and titers are determined by the Montgomery County Health Department. Individuals with non-protective titers require re-vaccination. Tetanus vaccines must be given every ten years. Staff potentially exposed to rabies or tetanus must seek immediate medical attention and may require re-vaccination.

B. ZOONOSIS

Zoonotic diseases are those that can be transmitted by non-human animals to humans. There is the potential for the transmission of zoonotic diseases at any facility or situation where animals are present. Zoonotic diseases that are commonly of concern at shelters like MCASAC are rabies, intestinal parasites, leptospirosis, Bartonella infection (cat scratch disease), ringworm, and sarcoptic mange, among others.

The most effective way to decrease the risk of zoonotic disease caused by bite or scratch wounds is to immediately recognize animals most likely to inflict bites or scratches. Only those staff and volunteers qualified to work with such animals may interact with them. Any animal can potentially bite, scratch, or otherwise injure a person or another animal, but animals who are stressed, fearful or injured may present a heightened risk. To minimize this risk of injury, all animal care staff and volunteers must be adequately trained in animal handling and behavior in accordance with the types of animals with which they will be working.

In preventing transmission of many zoonotic diseases, thorough hand washing is extremely important. All staff, volunteers, and visitors should wash their hands thoroughly after touching any animal at the shelter. Whenever possible, staff should wear disposable gloves when handling animals and their waste products. Food and beverages are not to be consumed in animal areas and food prep rooms. Human food items and dishes are not housed in the same sink as dog or cat dishes and litter boxes. Human food must not be stored in the same refrigerator as animal food or biologics/medications.

The risk of disease outbreak at MCASAC is minimized by providing animals with medications to eliminate internal and external parasites as well as vaccinations against specific diseases. These tools are vital to protect the health of shelter staff, volunteers, and visitors. Immuno-suppressed humans are at an increased risk for infection by zoonotic diseases. These individuals are strongly advised to discuss their working/volunteering at an animal shelter with their human medical care provider. In most cases, work can be found that is helpful for MCASAC but safe for the individual.

C. NOISE PROTECTION

Ear plugs are available to staff and volunteers. Ear plugs are encouraged when working in areas of high noise.

D. REPORTING INJURIES

All injuries that occur at MCASAC, or while working on behalf of MCASAC, must be reported immediately to a supervisor. This includes any bite, scratch, or other injury that occurs. An incident report will be filled out and that person will be advised to seek help or medical advice from their personal physician or urgent care provider.

XIV. EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

In the event of an emergency situation at MCASAC, every effort is made to protect all staff, volunteers, and animals. The Executive Director, or his or her designee, implements the incident command emergency response structure when appropriate. When this occurs, the Executive Director is responsible for all decisions regarding the emergency response and maintains contact with the Montgomery County Office of Emergency Management and other involved public safety and relief agencies, local weather advisory groups, staff and volunteers. In addition, the Director informs the public of the shelter closing as well as accessibility to shelter animals and/or housing of animals; this information will be conveyed through the Montgomery County 311 system and social media.

In the event of any emergency impacting shelter functions, MCASAC will respond in accordance with the Emergency Operation Plan.